



# Republican Policy Committee

Don Nickles, Chairman Doug Badger, Staff Director 347 Russell Senate Office Building (202)224-2946 <http://www.senate.gov/~rpc/>

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## The Clinton Credibility Canyon

### Clinton "Waivers" on Welfare

The Clinton Administration seems only to have one strategy regarding its record on welfare reform: *to run away from it, whatever it is at the moment.*

#### President Clinton on Welfare — This Week

- In President Clinton's weekly radio address on May 18, he heaped glowing praise on the State of Wisconsin for its comprehensive welfare reform, even offering federal help:

*"Wisconsin has the making of a solid, bold welfare reform plan. We should get it done. I pledge that my administration will work with Wisconsin to make an effective transition to a new vision of welfare . . ."*

Realizing that granting Wisconsin a waiver for its innovative welfare reform program meant actually removing the shackles of a failed federal system for the citizens of Wisconsin, White House Deputy Chief of Staff, Harold Ickes said the details of Wisconsin's plan *"will have to be negotiated"* and stated, *"details will be changed."*

This play on the public is standard fare for the Clinton White House, granting part of the waiver so as to extend the appearance of reform, but not truly breaking down the federal barriers which prevent comprehensive welfare reform.

#### Drug Testing for Welfare Recipients

On the specifics, the Clinton credibility canyon grows even wider. On the issue of drug-testing welfare recipients, the White House does not even know what is in its own bill:

- *"In fact, drug testing is something that not only has the president authorized through the waivers that he signed but, in fact, specifically authorized in the president's version of welfare reform that we submitted to Congress this year."*

[White House Press Secretary Mike McCurry, 5/21/96; emphasis added]

- *Not True, Mr. McCurry:* As the *Washington Post* reported on May 23: *"White House officials said . . . Clinton has never made the issue of drug tests for welfare recipients a part of any of his proposals, nor advocated it publicly."*

When caught on the facts, the White House tries to invoke their waiver game, but that play is fast becoming old and tired.

- The White House granted a waiver to the State of South Carolina to allow a drug test of its recipients *but the waiver does not allow the welfare recipient to be taken off the welfare rolls for using drugs as long as they are in treatment.*

Not surprisingly, when the Clinton rhetoric met with the reality regarding the South Carolina waiver, the Clinton credibility canyon grew wider.

- As described by South Carolina Governor Beasley: *"We said if you get caught [using drugs] while on welfare, you get put in treatment. If you get caught a second time, we're cutting you off. The Clinton Administration said no to that proposal."*
- On Wednesday, May 22, the U.S. Senate agreed 92-8 that states should have the right to drug-test welfare recipients and to deny benefits to those recipients based on the drug test.
- Today in Wisconsin, the President said he would sign a welfare reform bill that contains drug testing for welfare recipients.

## **Clinton Gets One More Chance**

*The Congress will send the President welfare reform legislation that will provide:*

- Tough work requirements for welfare recipients and limits on lifetime benefits; and
- An end to Washington's reign over the welfare state that has only succeeded in providing us the legacy of intergenerational welfare dependency.

The President has spoken often and strongly on welfare reform. Will he finally follow up his speaking with actions, or will the administration continue to grow the credibility canyon?

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Staff Contact: Matthew Kirk, 224-2946